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TALKING GUNS AND EATING BUTTER

The inability of Democracy to keep pace with events was demonstrated in the Trades Union Congress debates at Brighton this week. We fear that it may again be obvious when the Labour Party meets at Margate in three weeks time. Any agenda prepared before the outbreak of the Korean War must be completely out-dated today; and the Labour Party will have the added difficulty that the policy statement recently issued by the National Executive, in an effort to reconcile Morrisonians and Bevanites, has suffered a similar fate.

The fact is that every industrial and political problem has been transformed by the Government's decision to give re-armament priority over peaceful reconstruction. Not unnaturally the rank and file have failed to understand these far-reaching implications; even more serious, their leaders, intent on extemporising the details of a huge defence programme, have no time to lay down the Socialist framework within which it should proceed. To impose a piece-meal structure of re-arament on peace-time Socialist planning would be to cripple both. Yet no one seems able to sit back and think out how the principles of Socialism are to be applied in building a war economy in peace-time.

There are many reasons for this failure. Sir Stafford Cripps, who has maintained personal control of economic policy for three years, is out of action; the dimensions of re-armament and the contribution of Western Europe to it are still unknown; and no one has any idea what proportion either of the finances or of the manpower the U.S.A. will provide. Moreover the Cabinet and the trade union leaders find it difficult to adapt their thinking to the new situation. A few weeks ago they were confronted with two dangers: first, that peace-time "prosperity" would lose them the next election by producing a popular demand for the end of Socialist control and austerity; and second, that the end of Marshall Aid would result in large-scale unemployment. Their whole thinking was directed to meeting these dangers. Yet today both have been suddenly removed. The threat of war has averted the threat of unemployment; and as soon as the effects of re-armament are felt by men in the street and the women in queues - they are bound to re-appear - the demand will be, not for less rationing and control but for more. But that time has not yet come: today we are talking guns and eating butter.

Faced with this situation, the Trades Union Congress, as expected, has given the Government massive support for its policy in Korea and for the general principle of re-armament; but on the precise economic plan for distributing the burden its counsels were confused, and it provided little guidance for Margate. Perhaps it could do no more, since, as we have said, the two vital factors - the full extent of re-armament and of American aid - which will determine the size of the consumer's cake are still unknown. What the Brighton Conference did make clear was that the "restraint" advocated by the General Council will be impossible without a national wages and profits policy, and that this cannot be enforced by the General Council itself.

Yet the need for such a policy is even more urgent in a partial war economy if fair shares are to be maintained. This means that the Government will have to take the responsibility for proclaiming it, without expecting more than acquiescence from the unions. The only practicable way of achieving it is to strengthen compulsory arbitration on the basis of a set of principles laid down by the Government for arbitrators to interpret systematically. Few unions will welcome this; but there is no longer any alternative. It is the best way of saving the structure of collective bargaining while distributing wage concessions to those who really need it.

The Government, therefore, must give up its laissez-faire attitude to wages. But this change of attitude must not apply only to the workers' remuneration: it must emphatically apply also to profits. Unless the increases of Service pay are merely to intensify wage demands in civil industry, the Government must explain why wage restraint is essential and lay down the framework of a "wages and profits" policy. This means that, in addition to formulating the principles of compulsory arbitration, it will either have to tax reserved, as well as distributed, profits or, alternatively, impose the capital levy which we have so often urged.

Responsibility here rests with the political wing. The need is for recognition by the Government that re-armament can be just as dangerous to working class living standards as unemployment and must be offset by just as drastic Socialist measures.

Truman Speaks

President Truman's broadcast, following his letters to Mr. Warren Austin and General MacArthur, has appreciably eased the international strain. It represents at least a temporary set-back for the war party of Louis Johnson and General Bradley and a victory over those generals and senators who do not yet realise that to drop atom bombs on Russia would be the beginning and not the end of a world war. It renounces any intention of preventive war or of conquest in China (including Formosa), and opens rather than slams doors that might lead to a Far Eastern settlement. In all this there is a strong element of political warfare which, in some measure, reflects the lessons that have been learnt in the still uncertain battle in Korea. It is a "peace offensive" in reply to Soviet propaganda. But a "peace offensive" is better than a war offensive, and it is something that, instead of merely emphasising the fact of North Korean aggression and Soviet guilt in the matter, President Truman carefully refrains from making charges against the Soviet Union that would rule out discussions, and states that the Koreans have a right to be "free, independent and united"

If Korea is to be united, it would seem to follow that the Security Council should hear delegates from North as well as South Korea. We must read President Truman's appeal to China not to be misled into fighting against the United Nations side by side with very credible reports that Mao Tse-tung has informed the Indian Ambassador that he would postpone exercising his rights in Formosa while efforts were being made to obtain recognition of Communist China on the Security Council. This prospect of improved relations between Communist China and the United States follows upon Chou En-lai's statesmanlike appeal to the United Nations, and is probably not offset even by Mr. Truman's strange words about Communist Imperialism in China. This phrase is intelligible in some Eastern European countries, but it is meaningless to the Chinese, who believe that they recently freed themselves from Western Imperialism by their own exertions.

Talks with Communist China on the Security Council should, we hope, lead to a full recognition of the new China and a settlement in Formosa. The Foreign Ministers may now meet under better auspices. At their last meeting no agreement was possible, if only because of the conflict between the U.S. Defence and State Departments. Now that Truman and Acheson have won a round in their battle against Bradley and Johnson, it should be possible to make a peace treaty with Japan which must include all the eleven Powers concerned, of which present-day China is one of the most important.

Washington Conference

Just as the British rearmament programme is at present accompanied by no overall plans for the transition to a semi-war economy, so the preparations of the Atlantic alliance have so far seemed to advance without much co-ordination. When the tripartite conference of the Foreign Ministers meets in Washington next week, they will have to tie up a number of loose ends. True, the outline of an overall plan begins to emerge; the priorities favoured by Washington can be inferred. First and foremost, the West Europeans must produce more troops: within a few days of each other Britain, France and Belgium - balanced on the other side by Poland - have announced plans for lengthening the period of military service. Mr. Spofford, Chairman of the Atlantic Deputies, has declared that the national programmes produced in Europe are "very useful"; but Washington is understood to be pressing for a higher ratio of British fighting units to mobilised soldiers. The main point, however, which the Washington Conference will have to settle, is how far American dollar assistance is to be forthcoming for the British and French rearmament programmes, and how far O.E.E.C. is to be converted from an agency for distributing Marshall Aid to a committee to co-ordinate the use of military assistance funds.

All these measures, it may be said, are justified by the argument that a "strong" Western Europe represents the best guarantee of peace. To this, however, there are two qualifications. First, Western European "strength" against Communism will not be achieved by imposing on its economy a military burden which wrecks its recovery. Secondly, as past experience has shown, there comes a point when the inflexibility and manner of thought which war preparations induce in the official mind transmute themselves into an additional and growing danger of war. From thinking over-much of war, are Western statesmen losing their capacity to think of peace?

Dr. Adenauer Proposes

Chancellor Adenauer's request to the Western Powers for permission to raise a strongly armed, centralised constabulary in the Federal Republic has now had the public backing of M. Rene Pleven, the French Premier. It is one among many requests from the Chancellor which are to come before the three Foreign Ministers. Adenauer has not, it should be noted, asked for permission to raise an army: "he is not a militarist", as Carlo Schmid, the Social-Democratic leader in the Federal Assembly, said in conversation lately, "he is a gendarmist". Nor at the moment is he pressing for permission to raise the German divisions which he has often said that he would like to see incorporated in a "European army". He wants, at least as a beginning, a strong gendarmerie which will give his Government new prestige, bolster the morale of the civil police, and act effectively - rather, perhaps, as the Italian jeep-mounted Celere act - to put down "unrest". It was inevitable that such a request should soon be made; and the Western Powers, even if they wished to refuse it, would find it hard to do so in view of the para-military forces in the "German Democratic Republic."

A more revealing indication of the determined manner in which the Federal Republic is pursuing full self-government is contained in the second memorandum which Adenauer has now sent to the occupying Powers. Unlike the first, this memorandum does not deal with security; it deals with the restrictions which still exist upon Bonn's economic freedom. If published reports are reliable, Bonn has now formulated an official demand that restrictions on the German steel industry should be finally removed. The steel-owners, of course, have long inveighed against the production "ceiling" of 11.1 million tons (or 13.5 million tons' capacity); and current production is in fact running at a little over the permitted level. But this is the first time that Bonn has officially and formally espoused their cause. It does so at a time when the French industry has apparently withdrawn its objections to unlimited German steel - as part of the Schuman Plan negotiations - and when the Quai d'Orsay has let it be known that the French Government is prepared to see the manufacture of arms initiated in the Ruhr. Rearmament, it would seem, is once more to be made to solve the problems of West European heavy industry.

FUTURE ISSUES

In the event of the trade dispute in the printing industry continuing, we hope to appear each week in an emergency format, enlarged to include more of our regular features. In the present circumstances we can only guarantee delivery to postal subscribers.

Next week's issue is planned to contain, amongst other contributions, R.H.S. Crossman's reflections on his recent tour in Western Europe; the concluding instalment of Basil Davidson's report on "The Highlands in Decay"; ampler Book Reviews, and the results of Competition No. 1070.

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EMERGENT COLOSSUS

The elections in South West Africa last week constitute only one of many events which have forced a new awareness of Africa into the public mind. Thanks partly to the preference of German settlers for a Government of Hitler's way of thinking, the results strengthen the Nationalists in the Union Parliament; and the nature of the Nationalist Government is beginning to be widely understood in Britain. When Michael Scott declares that "the tragedy of South Africa is that her problem is not a colour problem but a White problem", a growing and by no means sectarian audience takes this as the simple statement of a grim and shameful truth.

Its latest demonstration is the unsuccessful attempt in Pretoria to unseat Senator Ballinger, a Scotsman who has resided in the Union since 1928, on the astonishing grounds that he is not a Union national; but Ballinger, after all, is a spokesman for the native peoples in a country where the native peoples are not supposed to speak. Even the Churches, not always quick to oppose a system which produces social misery (as distinct from resenting the misery itself), find the policies of the Nationalist Government increasingly unchristian and perverse - notwithstanding that Dr. Malan, Doctor of Divinity of the University of Leyden and Minister of the Dutch Reformed Church, has the blessing and sanction of his fellow-pastors.

But it is not only in South Africa that relations between Black men and White men reach bitterness and violence. Riots in West Africa, bannings, imprisonment, censorship, and threats of deportation in East Africa, conditions of incipient civil war in some of the North African territories, the silence of the grave over Angola and the Congo: these are among the signs of an approaching trial of force - with everywhere a fierce belief that the day of the White man's domination is nearing its end, and will be upheld, now, if at all, only by undisguised brute force. While multitudes in Asia thrust and blunder towards the civilisation which White exploitation has always denied them, Africa begins to throb with the same fury.

The reasons which make this trial of strength inevitable in the more or less foreseeable future are obviously complex. No doubt they are part of the general crisis of of the Western world. They flow from the example of Asia, from the opportunity of a weakened Europe, above all from the consequences of that peculiar system of primary exploitation which has ravaged the African colonies in more or less degree, and has kept them in indigence and wretchedness. The brief history of White colonisation in Africa, after all, is unlikely to provide the historian with much to admire. Unhappier than other subjected countries and continents, Africa will carry into its future few great monuments to the White man's culture, little or nothing to bedazzle and to praise, no high systems of law and order - even though harsh - to mark that civilisation passed this way. Yet the ideas from which civilisation springs - the ideas of reason, science, education, equality, self-government - have taken root in spite of every discouragement. It is much to the credit of the Labour Government that the last few years have seen the removal, especially in West Africa, of some of these discouragements.

In some respects the crisis in Africa is far advanced. Extreme positions are being taken. The character of the opposing forces - and they exist in one form or another in all the African territories - is blatant, forceful, and explosive. The Nationalists in the Union are only doing what the White minorities elsewhere (with notable and honourable exceptions) would apparently imitate if they could, or what, as far as they may, they are already imitating. These settlers see themselves faced with eclipse and engulfment; and they search for means of protecting their threatened supremacy. In five British territories in East Africa - Kenya, Uganda, Nyasaland, Tanganyika, and Northern Rhodesia - a population of 78,000 Europeans claims sovereignty over the lives and destinies of 19 million Africans. Far from having undertaken some great civilising mission, this minority contents itself for the most part with ranching, made possible by cheap native labour. Since they know that the processes of democracy, leading to self-government and social justice, would bring this wasteful colonialism to an end, the settlers can apparently think of no better method of self-protection than the legalised slavedom of Apartheid.

In Southern Rhodesia, the White Parliament is pressing for Dominion status so as to be free of liberalism in Whitehall; in Northern Rhodesia the settlers' leader, Mr. Welensky, has lately repeated the demand for more autonomy of London, and - to strengthen the settlers' front - for the federation of the Central African colonies. In Tanganyika, the settlers are up in arms (not yet literally) because the Governor has dared to advance the principle of non-racial - if indirect - parliamentary election. And so the struggle goes on, varying from region to region, but present everywhere - and notably in West Africa, where White settlement is practically nil and tribal life still remains partially intact and dignified.

Africa, in other words, is nearing the point where rebellions begin. Many of the nationalist movements now observable in British and other territories suggest that these rebellions, if they have to come, will be bloody, merciless, and the reverse of civilising. Sentimentality about the innate wisdom and kindliness of Africans will be unwise. There is nothing to suggest that Black nationalism will be any more desirable than White nationalism. If African self-government is to mean that Africans must tramp the same weary trail towards a genuine democracy which the White peoples have tramped - and are tramping still - then the end of White supremacy will have proved as selfish and as unconstructive as the beginning. Perhaps the one great enterprise upon which the colonial Powers can now embark in Africa is to ensure that self-government and independence are achieved for these territories under certain social - and, in the end, Socialist - safeguards.

The White peoples can revive and restore their name in Africa upon one condition. They must show that they have vision enough to promote self-government under conditions which spare the chaotic and - for much of colonial Africa - the unnatural period of individualist and capitalist development. To put off the evil day by attempting to share power with local hierarchies, with chiefs and kings and kabakas, is merely to make the future still darker and more doubtful. What Britain and other colonial Powers must now be doing, if they wish to avert a crescendo of violence, is to go rapidly about the business of promoting political and economic self-government along advanced social lines.

Development schemes which promote co-operative settlement, which promise the birth of socially-controlled industry, which bring the Africans into the ambit of modern technology, are schemes which may yet do much to save the colonial Powers from volcanoes of hatred and frustration now forcing their way through the thin crust of use and habit. No projects will today gain acceptance by Africans without a keen, mistrustful scrutiny. This giant, though toiling still with slaves, has not lost his eyes but has regained them. He will not thank the bounty of White civilisation for more investment which exploits his ignorance and misery. In these next crucial years, he will confirm the White man as his oppressor and his enemy - or accept him as his equal and friend. The choice lies with us.

LONDON DIARY

It is ridiculous to accuse Mr. Attlee of not "rising above the battle"; Mr. Churchill was the challenger and had the choice of weapons. It is no deep secret - or if it is I am going to reveal it - that the Premier very reluctantly agreed that it was necessary for him to make a Party reply to a Party attack. He had no alternative but to reveal to a gullible public that Mr. Churchill's grandiloquent words about the early recall of Parliament and the Government's delays and hesitations were no more than a manoeuvre to put Mr. Attlee out and Mr. Churchill in power. The Premier did this with a very simple and dignified disdain that exposed Mr. Churchill's broadcast as cheap and unworthy.

* * *

I see from the Johannesburg Star that Mr. Erasmus, Dr. Malan's Minister of Defence, is coming here this month to open consultations "on a defensive alliance of all nations with interests in Africa and to secure supplies modern weapons for expanding the Union Defence Force". According to Mr. Erasmus, his Government's defence policy is that "any Communist attack on the African continent would be an attack on the Union". It is all very convenient - especially if nationalism is called Communism. Faced with the fact that the racial obscurantism of a small white minority is arousing the latent nationalism of the African people, Dr. Malan and his friends seek an instrument which will enable them to suppress as "indirect Communist aggression" any national movement which threatens them. But there is one difficulty. Sir Godfrey Huggins, the Prime Minister of Southern Rhodesia, has defined it neatly. He "has long held the view" - I am quoting from the Star again - "that without the willing co-operation of native troops, Africa is indefensible". It remained only for the Daily Telegraph, writing editorially, to complete the point. "The value of South African participation", wrote that paper with a wince of embarrassment, "in any future war is unfortunately lessened by her racial policy". Really a splendid specimen of under-statement.

* * *

One of the influences inducing President Truman to restate a moderate policy for Korea may have been the effect of this war on American G.Is. The New China News Agency (whose accuracy in this matter can be checked) reports that an American prisoner-of-war, First Lieutenant Robert Layton, who was a bombardier in a B.29, is now broadcasting from Pyongyang. He said: "There is no doubt that the Koreans hate Americans, and when I consider the casualties American planes have caused to the innocent Koreans, I can fully understand why. The Koreans want their national unity and freedom, so just let them have it". It would be interesting to know if this American officer, who urges American forces to withdraw from Korea, was a "Red" before the campaign started. Another young G.I., Private Kimball from Texas, (said to have been captured together with the Observer's correspondent, Philip Dean) is reported to have told a correspondent of the same agency that he was a "truck driver, boxer, wrestler, and speedway driver" who joined the Army "to save money so that afterwards I could study something and settle down and have a family. I wanted to see Japan too. Like nearly all these G.I.s I thought it was a peacetime Army. I have only one complaint and that is against the United States Air Force. Have you seen what those lousy bastards are doing? Have you seen the villages - miles from anything like a military objective - flat as a field? Have you seen them shooting peasants working in the fields and strafing little cottages not big enough to hold a cow? ... Coming up here I saw nine peasants dead in one field, where they were working on the rice, and three more in another... I can't agree with my country doing these things." Again this statement may have been "doctored" or made by a "Red" but it sounds to me more like the normal reaction of a thoroughly decent G.I.

A recent article in this paper on the Assumption of the Virgin has brought a couple of letters of vulgar abuse, several of generous praise and one or two explaining that the "body" that was caught up in Heaven was spiritual, not physical. The best of these came from a medieval scholar, whose letter I wish we had room to print. One letter goes a stage further, suggesting that the dogma is merely an admirable piece of poetic symbolism. These letters confirm our view that sophisticated Catholics explain the dogma by making the body spiritual (in which case it is not a body!) while the simplest, anthropomorphic view is held to be good enough for the uneducated mass. For instance, I see a Catholic authority quoted the other day as saying that God so loved His Mother that He did not wish to wait for Her body to join Him in Heaven with Her soul! Statements like this seem to justify the comment of another writer who says that the Pope could not have promulgated the doctrine of the Assumption earlier because Heaven must be at least 2,000 light years from the earth, so that the BVM, travelling at the speed of light, would now be "only just arriving". Ribaldry? No. Since it only makes fun of a doctrine which I am told no educated Catholic believes.

* * *

The War Office has still not told us enough about the recent secret court martial. We are now informed that the charges were not murder, treason or rape but "malicious damage to property". This is baffling. You could break all the windows of the Colonel's house without doing three years in jail for it. Since American witnesses were present some suggest that the incident must have arisen out of trouble between British soldiers and G.I.s; others whisper "sabotage". Speculation is inevitable as long as the charges are secret. The truth is almost certainly less damaging than all the ideas that are occurring in little groups of soldiers discussing the story in barracks all over the country.

* * *

"No", said X. "I am not at all sorry to hear that the weekly papers are being shut down. There is much too much reading matter anyway. We should all do better without the newspapers". "That", I said, "is an arguable proposition. But present methods of diminishing our reading matter seem to me a bit indiscriminate. I agree with the Bishop of Birmingham that there are too many people in the world, but that wouldn't make me tell the relative of somebody who had just been killed in an air crash that it was of no consequence because the accident had reduced the population".

CRITIC

EIN VOLK

What strange delusions influence the Powers
Who feverishly mobilise for peace,
Who speak of Germany as "theirs" and "ours",
And rush to arm the Wehrmacht - as police!

What crowning folly born of frantic fear,
What triumph of expedience over morals,
To post a German guard at our frontier,
And think he'll kill his kin to serve our quarrels!

What asses Russians are, what fools are we,
While nervous qualms our shallow scruples smother,
To plan a pattern of security
That counts on Germans to destroy each other.

Now East and West "their" Germany defend -
They find the ex-Storm-Trooper nothing loath -
The German they rearm has gained his end,
He'll use their weapons for revenge on both.

SAGITTARIUS.

WHAT DO THE RUSSIANS THINK OF IT? II.

In The Crisis of the Colonial System, a collective work recently published in Moscow, we read of the significance of Russia's "potent effect on the countries of the East". Further, in the chapter on Korea, the book declares the absorption, by peaceful means, of Southern Korea by Northern Korea to be "historically inevitable," the South-Korean "State" being, in terms of Korean realities, a purely artificial and temporary structure.

It so happened that, on June 25, the "absorption" of the South by the North began by means that were anything but peaceful. The claim put forward by the Russians at first was that the South-Korean Army had invaded North Korea, and this claim has not been abandoned. Significantly, however, this is not what the Russian press dwells on. What is emphasised instead is that the war in Korea was provoked, and knowingly provoked by General MacArthur. To the Russians he is a "maniac" who not only thinks of himself as the de facto Mikado, but also as the future overlord of the whole of Asia.

Having provoked "civil war" in Korea, America then promptly followed MacArthur's line of "intervening" in the country, and, in the Russian version, the other members of the Security Council were "stampeded into it," without anyone having even had time to examine all the facts. The "civil war" theory is in the centre of the Russian argumentation about the beginnings of the Korean war, and the 1933 League of Nations resolution on the Definition of Aggression - which states that a civil war in one country is no excuse for another country to intervene - is being continuously used to show that the U.S.A. comes under this definition of "aggression."

Perhaps the Russians are not quite sure that they have here a foolproof legal case; what they are more interested in, however, is to show that the Americans haven't a foolproof legal case either. In the circumstances, it is better to get down to it, and work out a peaceful settlement.

But as long as the United States shows no sign of wanting a peaceful settlement in Korea (after which, whatever the details of the settlement, the evolution of Korea would sooner or later follow its "natural and historically inevitable course") the call to the whole of Asia - including Japan - to "rise against the Americans" must continue.

Korea has rapidly been developed into a symbol both in Russia and in the whole of Asia. Whether it all ends with an American Dunkirk or with the martyrdom of the Korean people, Asia will have been roused against the United States, and a clear suggestion running through all Russian propaganda is that America would be well advised to be "reasonable."

Korea to-day is Russia's - and China's - darling. Pro-Korean sentiment in Russia is being worked up to fever pitch. It is something as strong, if not stronger than what so many of us experienced at the time of the Spanish Civil War. Exhibitions of Korean art are being shown in Russia; hundreds of theatres are producing a play, South of the 38th Parallel, written by a Korean playwright even before the war began and depicting the horrors of the Synghman Rhee regime and of the American occupation.

All this has a deep emotional effect on Asia, and on Russia, too. Sergei Borsenko and other Russian correspondents writing from Korea manage to strike precisely the kind of notes that cannot fail to move the Russian reader. The descriptions of the hundreds of bodies murdered by Synghman Rhee's police are exactly like the descriptions of Nazi atrocities during the war; so are the descriptions of the stoicism of the Korean people, and of the bombings of Korean towns. And, just as in Russia during the war, the enemy's barbarity is contrasted with his cowardice, and the Asiatic superiority over "the American on the run"; and the combination of hatred-plus-contempt is being created throughout Asia by every means of Soviet propaganda.

Japan is scarcely mentioned, perhaps because Japan is hated by both China and Korea - "though," as one Russian report from Korea said, "hated less than America." Vague hopes, nevertheless, continue to be entertained that Japan, too, will join in the Asiatic revolt against America. At the same time, however, it is feared that Japan may betray the cause of Asian solidarity, and may fall for MacArthur's alleged plan to reconquer China, with American troops landing in the south, Chiang Kai-shek troops in the centre, and Japanese troops in the north. Is Russia really frightened of this, or would she, as is so widely believed in the west, welcome this kind of American suicide? Although, in a cynical way, the Russians might like to see America become involved in a war with China, it is extremely doubtful whether they really would. China requires long years of recovery, even more than Russia does; the Russians could scarcely keep out of an American-Chinese war, and they would prefer the "Socialist triumph" in China to be achieved by peaceful, and not catastrophic methods. And even if the war were to start over Formosa, the Russians are fairly sure that it would only be a "token war," in which America would, morally, have no leg to stand on; and such a war would, of course, have the advantage of intensifying anti-American sentiment throughout Asia even more.

For all that, the impression one gets from the Russian press to-day is that the American "invasion" of Korea has alarmed the Russians. This may be seen from the fact that, despite all their love and affection for the Koreans, they are carefully refraining from giving them any open help. It is perhaps also notable that, in the last few weeks, extremely little should have been said in the Russian papers about Indo-China, Malaya, or Indonesia - which suggests that they think it wiser, for the present, to "lay off" - and not to upset the French, British and Dutch.

Despite all the devastating criticism of "bourgeois-nationalist" India in the past ("all social problems left unsettled") Nehru is now being treated in the Soviet press with the greatest politeness. But, as against this, oddly enough, Ali Khan was angrily denounced as "the Synghman Rhee of Pakistan." But about the rest of the Middle East a somewhat mysterious silence is being observed. Whether Moscow intends to play its Azerbaijan card sooner or later is hard to say; she has always refused to consider herself permanently beaten in Persia, but after the Korean surprise, she is likely to go easy.

On Yugoslavia, Russia is taking a long-term view, and is expecting economic collapse in the country to bring about a return of the prodigal son. An invasion of Western Europe is surely the last thing Russia contemplates. It would, of course, happen on the day the first atom bomb dropped on Russia. One does not have the impression that Russia is particularly alarmed by American rearmament; the feeling in Russia is that the readier America is to strike, the more reluctant will the rest of the Western world be to follow her.

What is one to conclude from it all? First, that Russia does not want to be involved in a general war. But, secondly, that, in the long run, she will not - to put it euphemistically - discourage any peoples against kicking their Synghman Rhees and their Bao Dais in the teeth.

Paris. ALEXANDER WERTH.

LOST ARTICLES

People who read the London evening dailies probably concern themselves very little about prose style. They read rapidly in underground trains or at luncheon counters, and they look at the content of the news, not its form. In this way they miss a number of interesting characteristics that the language has been developing over the past few years in the columns of gossip writers and in the captions below photographs. Just when these new features began to appear it would be hard to say without some research into back numbers. Perhaps they began, in this country, ten years ago, in a small way. Perhaps they have been in common use for half that time. Where they come from, it needs no research at all to decide; the signs of origin are indefinable but unmistakable. Like most recent novelties in the English language they were a dollar import.

There are several of these new features, but they are all related and they might be classified as the "Disappearance of the Article (definite and indefinite) and Allied Changes." Anyone who desires to adopt an attitude towards them has, broadly speaking, the choice of two. He can view them as a Passionate Humanist and loathe them at first sight and forever; or as an Impartial Inquirer. The Impartial Inquirer is not prepared to condemn them out of hand; he will argue that Articles (except the Thirty-nine) are not sacred and that the Romans did very well without them. He will point out that the Russians never use them, nor the Chinese, and that the Welsh have no indefinite Article. These three together make up a large part of humanity and they may be in the right. We may have been spending ink and breath unnecessarily for centuries and it may be time to economise. We ought at least, he will plead, to find out why the daily diarist does these things, and neither condemn nor approve until we know the answer.

It would be as well to begin with a few examples to see what kind of an appearance the new features make. They are not difficult to find. The following set of three came from the same paper on the same day, and there were many more. There was an arresting paragraph beginning "Said Chairman Lord Lyle" and something followed, perhaps about Mr. Cube and nationalisation, but the details do not matter. Then there was a reference to "the travelling bags of Radio Commentator Stewart Macpherson." Lastly, the buyer of something was "Rugger blue Mr. Dash" - and so on indefinitely. The Articles come flying out like pebbles from under car wheels. Anyone who had formed his ideas of English usage from Addison or Sterne or Edgar Wallace would expect to find in each of the sentences quoted a definite Article (and in the last one to find two of them) which is not there. It is reasonable while remaining very impartial, to wonder why they are not there. There must be a reason somewhere - a deep compelling reason.

It is no use asking the writers themselves. The omission is probably unconscious. They do not do it to annoy. They have no grudge against the smaller pieces of the language. Their wish is only to please and inform the general reader, not by what they omit but by what they put in; and it is here that the Inquiry ought to begin - by considering what they put in and why. What are the principles on which they present News to the public? What, in a word, is the thing that they would call their Angle?

There seem to be two very important maxims. The first is that you can interest the reader even in very commonplace people if you add some very commonplace information about them. The other is that it is unsafe to assume that the reader knows anything at all except of course how to read. For example, the news that an engine driver in Rutlandshire was writing a life of Milton might be good enough for The Times without any adornment; but it would not do as a news item for the journals who really understand these things until it had been expanded at the very least to: "42-years old, five feet high Engine-driver Williamson is writing a life of Milton". But even that would be considered rather tepid treatment. The really skilled concoctor of paragraphs might transform it to: "Writing a life of blind-poet ('when I consider how my light is spent') Milton is 42-year old etcetera Williamson," thus paying proper regard to the second of the two great maxims - that no knowledge should be assumed, not even the knowledge that Milton was a poet or that he was blind and wrote a sonnet about it.

Obviously the application of the two maxims puts a good deal of pressure on the defenceless Articles. If it is wrong to mention Rossini without the information that he wrote operas, or a post office clerk without adding her age and the colour of her eyes, it creates a heavy demand on space. Something must be pared away somewhere. There are minor economies that can be and are practised - e.g., with conjunctions like "and" ("It is an analysis of Marxism in practice, will be published in January") or prepositions like "of" ("England's Mr. Attlee sees India's Mr. Nehru"). But these are petty savings. The chief strain must fall on the Articles. The chain of intriguing personal detail that is to be hung about every proper name appearing in the paper must have no superfluous links - there is no space for them. It is easy to see how, when you are dealing in bright brief descriptions and captions a phrase like "the packing-clerk William Briggs" appears as tedious and formal as "one Mr. Wilkinson, a clergyman." Who could object if it were shortened? certainly not Mr. Briggs, who understands packing and must realise the convenience of having handy labels that can be neatly and swiftly attached without a tangle of "the's" and "a's" and "an's." When you are using a dozen or so labels per column the convenience becomes a burning necessity.

Sometimes, in his zealous effort to reconcile economy and the two important maxims, the most experienced news writer can slip. "Husband William is in the Army" may achieve an elegant terseness beyond anything Mrs. Elton ever dreamed of, but it is just not terse enough. "Husband" would have done as much for the reader's sluggish fancy and saved seven letters. Fat, thin, short, dark, would have done more and still saved at least two. Sometimes, too, he tacks on a label so blatantly superfluous as to affront even the lowest of his readers. "Poet Mac-Niece" may be justified in spite of the B.B.C., but "Cartoonist David Low" in a paper which publishes a Low Cartoon on the same page is something that Shakespeare-character Rosalind might have called too much of a good thing, and puts a strain even on the most resolute impartiality.

Occasionally he makes another, more excusable, error. The label is not superfluous but carelessly inscribed, and it becomes almost a libel. The columnist is virtually committed by now to labelling every woman under fifty "pretty", or at least "attractive." This must be a great bore, and occasionally, inevitably, he forgets or perhaps his better self rebels. Whatever the reason, he produces a sentence like "pretty, red-haired, Miss X and dark-haired Miss Y." which has a rather ungallant implication.

But only occasionally. For the labels are stock labels, with spaces for age, personal appearance and profession, and they are properly filled in. The fact that many people are younger than their ages, sweeter than their exteriors and nobler than their callings, doesn't seem to concern either writer or reader. The latter apparently yearns for the details and has no regrets for the Articles. Shakespeare understood and expressed this yearning, as he did most human emotions. "Who is (attractive? brown-haired? twenty-two-year-old?) Sylvia?" and "What is she?" - for that must go on the label, too.

OSRIC

FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE

IN a magnificent full-length life of Florence Nightingale (Constable 15s.) Mrs. Woodham-Smith proves to be one of the most brilliant and perceptive biographers of our time. This great book - fruit of six years' ploughing through the mountain of Nightingale papers - is a masterpiece of lucid arrangement and judicious comment; and must certainly supplant all previous attempts to fathom the character of that remarkable woman. The official two-volume Life appeared in 1913, three years after Miss Nightingale's death; but Sir Herbert Cook did not have access to many of the essential documents, and for family reasons was asked not to make full use even of the material available. Lytton Strachey in the famous essay, was largely dependent on the restricted knowledge of Sir Herbert Cook. Even so, he discerned that some superhuman element was at work in the Lady with the Lamp; and he fancied her in the clutches of a Demon, a sinister Spirit driving her blindly to fulfil her destiny. Had he known that Miss Nightingale was forging on her relentless way with her eyes wide open, in the firm conviction that she was the Almighty's chosen instrument, Strachey would have had to revise his notion. The ordinary eminent Victorian was engaged in a ceaseless wrestling-match with his conscience and liable to nervous indigestion as a result of trying to reconcile human appetites with the will of God. Florence Nightingale was immune to nervous indigestion; her occupational disease was overwork. She believed simply that she was the will of God; and that God was in a hurry.

In 1837 it was not easy for a Protestant girl of sixteen, tall and pretty, with thick wavy chestnut hair, on the eve of "coming out" with every social advantage, to adapt herself to an abrupt call from God; especially when the divine utterance was so laconic and uninformative. Several years passed before the Nightingale family began to realise that something was amiss with Florence. She insisted on studying Greek and mathematics, but these unladylike activities were confined to her bedroom before breakfast. Later in the day she joined the family circle in the social round of amusements more appropriate to her station in life: she danced, she flirted, she was asked out to dinner by the Duke of Devonshire. The family was quite unaware that upstairs Florence atoned for her frivolity by writing scornful little notes on "the pride of life". Her father was a charming, lazy dilettante; her mother was a deadly combination of self-indulgence and self-pity; her elder sister, Parthenope, was a featherheaded flibbertygibbet, eaten up with jealousy of Florence. Not one of her relations, except her Aunt Mai, showed the girl any sympathy in her desire to undertake humanitarian work. The first family crisis came when Florence, at the age of 25, made up her mind that nursing was to be her vocation, and asked for permission to enter Salisbury Infirmary for instruction. "Mama was terrified", Parthenope flew into hysterics, and Mr. Nightingale ran away from the awful scene. The request was rejected with contumely.

Why did Florence Nightingale, whose iron will-power was to surprise and terrify the authorities at Sautan ten years later, submit so patiently to her family's ridiculous dictation? Six years had to pass before she actually nursed in a hospital, years that she spent reading Bluebooks, nursing the poor in the village, and taking her share in "the pride of life" - wasting her precious time so it seemed. The hitherto accepted explanation for this strange interval of inaction has been that Miss Nightingale was still toying with the idea of a conventional marriage to gratify her parents. But Mrs. Woodham-Smith's patient research reveals that the lull of 1845-51, before the storm of activity burst out, cannot be attributed to indecision: the psychologists might call it a latency period. For those six years a more insidious force than the courtship of Dicky Milnes was paralyzing Miss Nightingale: she was living, like a schoolboy, in a trance of day dreams.

"Her dreams centred upon Richard Monckton Milnes" says Mrs. Woodham-Smith. "She imagined herself married to him, performing heroic deeds with him." Yet it was only in the realm of imagination that she wished to marry the man. On the workaday level of reality she was never in any doubt that her vocation demanded of her a virgin sacrifice. When she finally rejected Milnes' offer of marriage in 1849 she made a note of her motive for doing so: such a marriage would interfere with her work. (If that was the reason she gave him in person he must have been surprised, for Miss Nightingale's work at that time consisted of reading Bluebooks). But the day-dreams went on. Not all of them were concerned with Monckton Milnes; sometimes women played the central role. She could do without physical indulgence in fact, but not in phantasy. Not until she had worked the whole gamut of passion out of her system in the hard way would she be ready to start on business. And the way was agonisingly hard! "Oh! God. No more love. No more marriage. Oh! God!" she jotted down in a pathetic plea for mercy.

The frustration was nearing its end. The following year God, or the exhaustion of some hormone in her blood-stream, did save her. She sloughed off her day-dreams like the shell of a chrysalis; and flew away to her hospitals. She had served her probation with God and her union with him was consummated; in 1853 he gave her the word "Go."

And go she did. The next period of her life with its incessant labour, its struggles and its triumphs reads more like the exploits of some mythological heroine than of a Victorian lady. She cleaned up in a few months, more or less single-handed, the squalid back-area of the Crimean War - worse than any Augean stable; she revolutionised nursing from a trade of prostitutes and drunkards to a profession of angels of mercy; she brought drains to the great insanitary cities of India; she tackled the deplorable system of land-tenure in Bengal; she even began the fabulous task of lopping the Hydra heads of bureaucracy inside the War Office. And most of this was achieved from a suite of rooms in Mayfair, where she lay dying, as she thought. Under this handicap she had to use tools for her work; and she used them so relentlessly that they had a horrid habit of dying. Sidney Herbert dies; Clough dies; her cousin Hilary dies; Soyer dies; Aunt Mai ran away - and was not forgiven. Only Dr. Sutherland was always ready to hand; and his only merit as a tool was that he was unbreakable. He was so incompetent by her standards that he seemed unable even to die. Meanwhile God kept so close to her that in the fluster of work she sometimes forgot their relative positions and began to treat Him as a tool. "I must remember God is not my private secretary" she jotted down.

The long record of the partnership with God fills most of Mrs. Woodham-Smith's dramatic and moving pages; but an end had to come to the good works. In 1887 Miss Nightingale wrote to Aunt Mai "This year my powers seem all to have failed and old age set in." Another hormone change had occurred at the climacteric. The slim Lady with the Lamp grew stout; and, as her girth enlarged, her mind dwindled. The miracle was over; the fire went out. She died in 1910 at the age of ninety, almost forgotten by the world she had worked so hard to set right.

The character of Florence Nightingale, ruthless, benevolent, dominant and self-effacing, is unmistakeable. She was a Saint. Had she joined the Roman Catholic Church, as at one moment seemed likely, she would have had her niche by now, beside Joan of Arc and the Little Flower, lit by candles all over the world; she would not have liked that. The Protestants cannot lay claim to her; she believed in none of their sects. Even the feminists fight shy of her; she was inclined to regard women as a sort of third-rate men. The God she served was undenominational, a merciless God of Efficiency; the Saints who worship that up-to-date deity have as yet no calendar.

RALPH PARTRIDGE

THIS ENGLAND

A woman buyer for a leading city fashion-house said... "Nobody knows quite why the Birmingham figure should be so difficult. It may be something to do with new regulations in the factories. Almost all the girls sit down to work nowadays and that is bound to have awful results in the end".- News Chronicle. (J.P.)

Early morning music on the B.B.C. is all part of a Communist plot, Sir Waldron Smithers, Conservative M.P. for Orpington told the Incorporated Association of Organists' Congress in Leeds yesterday.- Daily Graphic. (S. Price)

Lady types in her barge in all weathers.- Advt. in New Statesman. (K.E. Matthews)

THE ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

THE SECOND MRS. TANQUERAY

The legend of "The Second Mrs. Tanqueray", how persistently it has kept itself alive through the years! And of all the famous first nights, that one when Mrs. Patrick Campbell dazzled London must have been the most exciting. But that the legend does not only depend on Mrs. Pat is proved by the current revival at the Haymarket, where Miss Eileen Herlie plays the part with a completely different interpretation. There could hardly be a greater tribute to the skill of the play itself than to say that it stands up remarkably to a completely wrong-headed treatment of its central role. Aubrey Tanqueray's second wife, it will be remembered, had been a lady of the sort described as "anybody's property". In a highly formal society the results were bound, as his friend warned him, to be disastrous; and the disaster is brought to a head through his daughter by his first marriage, who introduces to the second Mrs. Tanqueray, socially isolated in Surrey, the man she proposes to marry: the young Captain and his future step mother-in-law recognise each other all too well. They have a few years previously lived together.

What kind of a person was this lady who was anybody's property in the 1890's? A young woman of uncontrolled impulses, a few good, most bad or at least socially undesirable, charming and gay, but wayward, violent, fierce, thoughtless. Above all without self-control in a society where formality and order and propriety were the most valued surface qualities. And how does Miss Herlie choose to play her? Why, as coldly controlled, soft-mouthed, muted. Miss Herlie possesses the first requisite of great acting - authority: and as a performance hers is well-designed and carried through all in a piece. It just happens to be wrong, and as I think, quite indefensible. She gives us a Mrs. Tanqueray without temperament - a contradiction in terms.

How is it then that we sit, all the same, thoroughly absorbed throughout the evening? And this in spite of the fact that the production, though it spares nothing in opulence and names, just fails at a number of crucial points to underline, as it should, the vanished formality of Society? The spell is cast simply by a forgotten skill of dramatic construction, (pace G.B.S.), as exact and tight-fitting as a jigsaw puzzle. Every smallest detail in the lines and business is there for a specific purpose which will sooner or later reveal itself. There is no waste-matter at all, not an ounce of spare flesh, hardly a superfluous hair. It is a triumph of craftsmanship, as indeed too is Pinero's extremely effective prose. What a pleasure to hear actors in the realistic tradition actually finishing their sentences, and constructing them too like educated people.

And the central situation? Has that faded into the meaningless? Are the moral values hopelessly dusty? Not that I could see. There is no longer Society, and we no longer insist on a separate moral code for men and women. But we have enough relics of both of these to be able to recreate the conflict perfectly easily for ourselves, to be caught up in it, and to be as much moved by it as Miss Herlie will let us be.

T. C. WORSLEY

EDINBURGH - II

When the Usher Hall is successively occupied by three visiting orchestras, it is difficult to avoid comparisons. The first two incumbents were the Radio Orchestras of France and Denmark. Roger Desormière is a notable exponent of French music; and many of his performances with the Radiodiffusion players (especially those of Fauré and Ravel, with that fine stylist, Mme Marguerite Long, as sole pianist) were of superior quality; but his taste in the classics is less certain (witness the excessive number of strings used to accompany a Mozart piano concerto), and there are some indifferent players among the wind. The Danes made a great impression by their serious musicianship and solid, homogeneous tone. I have heard Till Eulenspiegel played with more virtuosity and surface polish, but never in better style than by the Danish Radio Orchestra under Fritz Busch. They further earned our gratitude by performing, under their regular conductor Erik Tuxen, one of the leading works of Carl Nielsen, Denmark's greatest composer (1865-1931), whose originality and importance are at last, and none too soon, beginning to be recognised in England.

In addition to the Nielsen Symphony (No 5), Edinburgh has so far introduced us to three important new works. Hindemith's song-cycle, Das Marienleben (to poems of Rilke), is a recent and total revision of a score which first appeared some 25 years ago; it was sung, with pure tone, penetrating vision and absolute authority, by Jennie Tourel, to the ideal accompaniment of George Reeves. It is easy to see why Hindemith attaches such importance to this cycle. Nowhere else has he employed his harmonic language (a real language, not a series of lucky dips) with greater clarity and assurance, or to a deeper poetic purpose. The combination of spare, muscular piano writing with an unusually plastic and highly singable vocal line has produced something like a set of Dürer engravings, with their sharply chiselled lines, their dramatic stress and intensity of expression - and, now and then, a trace of Italian sensuousness - used to express an essentially austere and Nothern attitude towards religious experience. Das Marienleben seems to have every quality of a great song-cycle, except sheer melodic impulse: the brief motives are striking, and their employment masterly, but they seldom spread into large, spontaneous melodic curves. Bartok's Viola Concerto, a posthumous work, deciphered, pieced together and orchestrated with brilliant musicianship by Tibor Serly, and consummately played by William Primrose, seems likely, by reason of its uncommonly direct emotional appeal as well as its clarity of structure, to find a place in the repertory. Many future opportunities will also arise, I feel confident, of discussing Sir Arthur Bliss's new String Quartet (his second), which was introduced at Edinburgh by the Griller ensemble. As often before, this composer is seen at his best in chamber music, where the nature of the medium allows him to give full scope to his vigorous inventive faculty and romantic exuberance without slopping over into coarseness or excess.

Desmond Shawe-Taylor

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